

here depends on a conviction—a conviction of domestic violence. That is a guilty verdict after a just trial, an adjudicated-fairly trial. Due process is completely intact, fully present, and I will not be compromised on that, I can promise you.

Two, domestic violence does not mean emotional distress. Domestic violence does not mean a verbal argument. Domestic violence means a violent crime.

Three, not a single innocent or law-abiding gun owner will or should be impacted. Today there are women trapped in relationships with violent criminals, our daughters and mothers, our friends, and our neighbors.

Convicted violent criminals have proven themselves to be unfit to fully participate in our society. We can't choose to just protect women with a ring on their finger from violent abusers. We must hold violent criminals accountable. Let's protect our daughters and punish the criminals.

Speaking from personal experience, domestic violence is a crime worth being tough on.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VAN HOLLEN). The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to share my support of the ongoing bipartisan efforts to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

As you know from the prior speaker, the distinguished Senator, negotiations to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act on a bipartisan basis have been ongoing now for three years. Since the beginning of this year, my office has been working closely with Senator ERNST's, Senator DURBIN's, and Senator MURKOWSKI's offices to negotiate bipartisan agreement to reauthorize this important and critical law. I am thrilled that we are now able to share that we have reached a bipartisan framework which will strengthen, modernize, and reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

We are committed to introducing this bill next month. This bipartisan agreement would reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act through 2026 and provide important opportunities to modernize the law that has been so critical to protecting and supporting survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Our bipartisan agreement would enhance and expand services for survivors of domestic violence—including survivors in rural communities, LGBT survivors, survivors with disabilities, and survivors who experience abuse later in life.

Our agreement would reauthorize and strengthen the criminal justice response to domestic violence, including by improving the Justice Department's STOP grant program, closing the "dating partner loophole" on a prospective basis, and strengthening the ability of Tribal courts to address instances of domestic violence on Tribal land.

Our agreement would also invest in prevention education efforts. It would expand access to emergency housing support for domestic violence survivors, and it would improve the healthcare response to sexual violence across the country.

These protections are urgently needed, and the time to act is now. I have been here for a while. I have never seen the coming together of the two sides of the aisle any stronger than it is now to work together to solve this problem. So I look forward to participating in the introduction of this bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act next month.

#### NOMINATION OF HOLLY A. THOMAS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I would, if I could, also like to speak briefly in support of Holly Thomas, who has been nominated to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Judge Thomas is an experienced appellate litigator and currently serves as a judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. And I hope my colleagues will support her.

Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Holly Thomas to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Judge Thomas is an experienced appellate litigator and sitting State court judge in California. I believe she would make an outstanding addition to the Ninth Circuit.

Her credentials are impeccable. She is a graduate of Stanford University and Yale Law School.

After law school, Judge Thomas spent more than a decade gaining experience and insight into the Federal appeals courts as a litigator whose primary focus was on appellate cases. She has served as a public interest lawyer with the NAACP, in the Federal Government as an appellate attorney with the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, and in State government in both California and New York.

Though she began her career as an appellate litigator, Judge Thomas has been fascinated by judicial service since her childhood. When she was a young child, her mother—who was a bookkeeper—would take her to the San Diego courthouse to watch the legal proceedings in court.

So it is fitting that in 2018, she was appointed to serve as a judge on the California Superior Court for Los Angeles County. Judge Thomas works in the Family Law Division, where she hears between 10 and 30 cases on average each day, including a mix of hearings and trials. She has also served on a temporary basis as a State appeals judge on the California Court of Appeal for the Second Appellate District.

Judge Thomas has a breadth of experience and knowledge that would make her well-suited to sit on the Ninth Circuit. If confirmed, Judge Thomas would be the first Black woman to serve on the Ninth Circuit from California and only the second Black woman to ever serve on the Ninth Circuit.

I encourage all my colleagues to vote for her confirmation.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

#### Violence Against Women Act

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am pleased to be on the floor today with my colleagues, both the Senator from Iowa behind me and the Senator from California, because I want to thank them publicly for their leadership as they work to address these issues of domestic violence. They have been leaders in this arena for years, and I appreciate that.

I am pleased to have worked with them on this framework that has been discussed by both Senators and to acknowledge the work of Senator DURBIN as part of this initiative as well.

I think as both of them have spoken, it is recognized that this is a matter of urgency. This is a matter for all of us, on a bipartisan basis. Domestic violence, unfortunately, knows no political bounds, and our response to those who are truly among the most vulnerable of us—that response—should also be bipartisan.

So I want to commend Senator ERNST, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator DURBIN for their work in really coming to find common ground on this very important matter. It has been years—

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Permit me a moment to interrupt you.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Please.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. One of my great joys is to work on a bipartisan basis, and the Senator from Alaska has been just wonderful. She is a 10, in my book.

You have listened to us on this side. Our staffs have been able to work closely together, and I think, thanks to you, we have a workable, bipartisan product. So I just want to say thank you. I wish the Senate could be more like this all the time, but I think we made a great notch in the right track. So thank you very much.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Well, thank you.

Again, it takes a lot of people, and the years that Senator ERNST has been working this initiative on this side of the aisle is something that, again, we want to build on, and we need to build on it together.

It has been years in the making. The last time we had a VAWA reauthorization was VAWA 2013, and so we are high past time to be addressing this very significant matter.

No compromise is perfect. I think everyone recognizes that. But what has been developed through this framework is a proposal that will really help to prevent violence, to support our survivors, and to hold perpetrators to account.

The effort to be here where we are today on the floor, speaking to this, is one thing, but we all want to get to that next step, which is filing the legislation so we can get it moving through this process, and I look forward to doing that in the new year.